



Utility Service Outages, Field Visits and Meter Box Access

Sarasota County notifies customers when there is an interruption of service or water advisory issued. The following information explains in detail why there is an interruption, how an advisory is issued and what you should do in the event of an interruption.

What is a boil water advisory?

A boil water advisory is a notice to customers issued by a water utility that is required by the Florida Department of Health when there is a chance of a water system contamination that could affect public health.

Why is an advisory issued?

A boil water advisory is issued when there is a possibility that the water pressure has dropped to a level that could allow harmful bacteria or foreign matter to enter the water system. Potential causes are:

- Water main break, repair or system maintenance.
- Damage to water lines due to a storm or other event.
- An electrical power outage affecting a water plant or facility.

How will I be notified of an advisory?

Sarasota County will notify customers if an advisory has been issued in their area by one or more of the following ways:

- Informational door hanger.
- Media release TV or radio.
- An alert (call, email, text) from CodeRED.
- Utility service outage website.
- Social media (Facebook or Twitter).

How can I disinfect my water so that it is safe to drink?

The preferred method is boiling. Boiling water kills harmful bacteria and parasites. Bring water to a full rolling boil for at least one minute. Allow water to cool to room temperature before use except when needed for cooking purposes. Adding approximately eight drops (or about one quarter teaspoon) of unscented household bleach per gallon of water will also disinfect water. Freezing does not disinfect water.

How can I use disinfected water?

After you have allowed disinfected or boiled water to cool before use, it may be used for the following:

- Washing dishes, cooking surfaces, raw foods or rinsing food.
- Drinking water for pets.
- Washing your hands before eating.
- Brushing your teeth.
- Preparing other drinks that need water such as tea, coffee, juices, baby formula, etc.
- Making ice.
- Any use where the water will be ingested internally.

Can I wash my hands, do laundry, shave or shower/bathe in water without disinfection?

Water does not need to be disinfected to be used for washing hands, laundry, bathing, showering, shaving or watering plants or lawns. Care should be taken not to swallow or allow water in eyes, nose or mouth. Children and disabled individuals or those with suppressed immune systems should be supervised to ensure water is not ingested. Though the risk of illness is minimal, individuals who have recent surgical wounds, are immuno-suppressed, or have a chronic illness may want to consider using bottled water for cleansing until the advisory is cancelled.

When will I know my water is safe again?

Most boil water advisories are issued until bacteria testing show that it is safe to drink the water. During this time, the county collects water samples in the affected area for two consecutive days and analyzes them for the presence of bacteria. Once the county has completed required bacteriological testing and the test results indicate no presence of harmful bacteria, the advisory will be cancelled by door hanger, media release to radio and TV, CodeRED alert, utility service outage website, Facebook and/or Twitter.

What is an indoor water usage advisory?

An indoor water usage advisory is a notice to customers to minimize indoor water usage by limiting toilet flushing, showering, dishwashing, laundry and other water uses during an interruption to sewer service.

Why is an indoor water usage advisory issued?

An indoor water usage advisory is issued to minimize sewer back-ups during an interruption to sewer service. This may be caused by one or more of these issues:

- A sewer main break, repair or system maintenance.
- Damage to sewer lines or systems due to a storm or other event.
- An electrical power outage to a sewer station, plant or facility.

How do I update my contact information?

- Visit www.scgov.net, then click on the "CodeRED Registration" below "Emergency Services."
- Visit www.scgov.net (keyword Public Utilities) to update your contact information for your sewer and/or water account. Click on the "Change/Update Mailing Address" button.
- You may also update your utility account contact information by email at utilitybill@scgov.net or by calling 941-861-6790.

Please note that if you have a medical condition dependent on water, you may contact 941-861-6790 to be notified in advance of any scheduled service interruptions.

What should I expect when utility staff comes to my address?

Public Utilities staff may knock on your door, present their utility employee identification and explain the nature of their visit. This could include distributing door hangers about boil water advisories. They may also need to access to water meter boxes, lift stations and other utility infrastructure to restore utility services or read consumption from the water meter.

Can I keep grass and vegetation clear of meter boxes, lift stations and other utility infrastructures at my address?

Yes, keep grass and other vegetation clear of meter boxes and lift stations so they are easily accessible to the Public Utilities staff.